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ABSTRACT

The Saskatoon Region Shared Service was formed by one urban and three adjoining rural school divisions in Saskatchewan (Canada), to serve a small, widespread population base of special needs students. The Shared Service established the Behavior Adjustment Model to develop a continuum of services for children with social and emotional problems. The program provides videotapes on classroom management for inservice teacher education and offers support services from a behavior consultant, social worker, psychologist, school administrator, or resource teacher. The procedures for receiving these support services are described. Statistical data on the numbers of clients served and types of services are provided. The Shared Service also developed the Social Learning Centre, to meet the needs of students with severe behavioral problems who are unable to cope with, or benefit from, the regular classroom program. The document describes the Centre's service approach, student population, staff, program individualization, length of stay, student integration and reintegration, funding, and volunteer involvement. (JDD)

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A Shared Service Approach for Children with Behavioral Disorders

Isabelle M. Clark

1. Historical Overview

Sixteen years ago, funding was provided by the Department of Education, Special Education Branch for school divisions to hire personnel to work as itinerants for children with special needs in two or more school divisions. The concept of shared services was started in the province of Saskatchewan because of a small population base of only one million people. The Saskatoon Region Shared Service was formed by an urban and three adjoining rural school divisions in the west central part of Saskatchewan (Figure 1). The Learning Assistance Centre for children with learning disabilities was developed. The four school divisions have successfully provided this shared service for learning disabled for the past 13 years.

Figure 1. Saskatoon Region Shared Services

Seven years ago, the same four school divisions agreed that a model to provide service to children with social and emotional problems was needed. The Behavior Adjustment Model (BAM) was developed to provide a continuum of services for these children (Figure 2).

2. Inservice for Classroom Teacher

The teacher in the regular classroom is capable of helping most children with mild to moderate problems. To assist them, an inservice package consisting of a video series was produced by a team at the University of Saskatchewan. Mondays, Marbles and Chalk is a series on classroom management consisting of eight videos with the accompanying leader and participant's manual. The teachers in each of the schools in the four school divisions participated in a year long inservice viewing the videos, practicing the techniques in their own classroom, and sharing their experiences. Many fulfilled requirements to obtain a university credit for their participation.

3. Additional Support Services

Students with more severe problems usually remain in their regular classroom but can receive additional support services. These support services include one or several of the following: parents, social worker, psychologist, school administrator, resource teacher, teacher associate, school system personnel, and other outside egencies.

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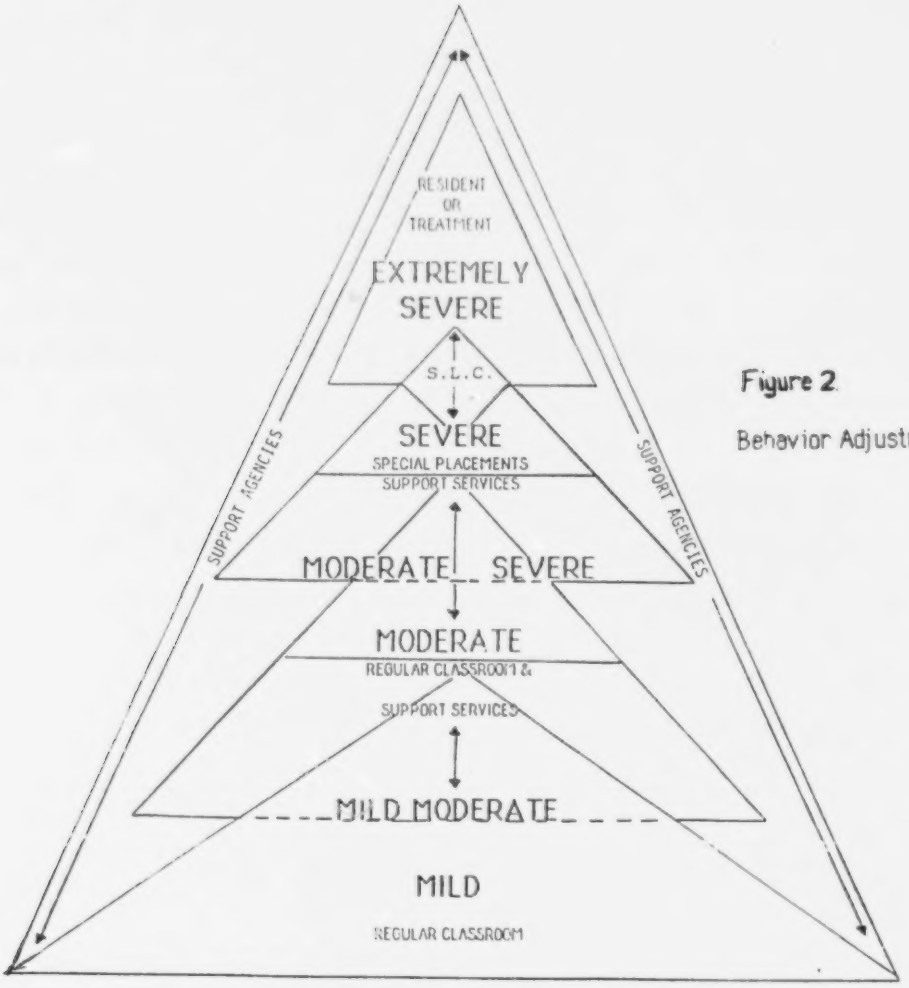

Figure 2

Behavior Adjustment Model

Within the Saskatoon Region Shared Services, most of the students who have moderate to severe behavioral problems remain in their home schools but can receive additional support from a shared services behavior consultant. Each of the four school divisions has develped a referral system as a means of accessing this service. The referral is first sent to the superintendent in charge of special education. It is then sent to the behavior consultant who may communicate with the superintendent or go directly to the referring school and meet with the school administrator resource teacher and classroom teacher. If the behavior is a major problem in the classroom, a classroom observation may be made, or a home visit may be scheduled. Finally a team meeting will be held at the school including in most cases the superintendent, school administrator, resource teacher, classroom teacher, parents, and behavior consultant. The meeting could also include social services if the child is in foster care or other agencies which have been involved. Information is shared and an action plan is developed with responsibilities defined for the school and the home. This plan may include, for example, the implemention of a behavior plan in the classroom or that the child recieve therapy

and the family receive counselling. The behavior consultant will return to the school and will also contact the family at a prearranged date to assess how the plan is progressing or if it may need modifications. Several team meetings may be held during one school year to assure that the plan is fostering growth and improvement.

The shared services behavior consultant is also responsible to provide inservice to individual schools or to school divisions. The objective being that not only is the student and the family receiving support but so are the teachers.

In order to provide an overview of the numbers and types of services that have been provided to the 4 school divisions within the shared services during the past 4 years, a summary is provided in Table 1. The table indicates that the behavior consultant was employed 50% of the time as a shard services behavior consultant and 50% as Head of the Social Learning Centre

School Division	Students	Initial Observations	Home Visits	Team Meetings	School Contact Conselling or Testing	Reports Written	Inservice
(1988-1989 Employed 50%)							
Saskatchewan Valley	18	16	2	21	12	55	3
Saskatoon West	23	9	17	29	24	66	1
Saskatoon East	23	11	9	20	15	58	0
Saskatoon Catholic	23	7	2	10	47	62	0
TOTALS	87	43	30	80	98	241	4
(1987-1988 Employed 50%)							
Saskatchewan Valley	17	19	10	11	11	51	1
Saskatoon West	24	24	12	34	18	82	0
Saskatoon East	34	33	8	17	26	83	0
Saskatoon Catholic	21	0	1	18	30	36	0
TOTALS	96	76	31	80	85	252	1
(1986-1987 Employed 50%)							
Saskatchew Valley	16	5	7	3	33	37	2
Saskatoon West	20	5	9	15	37	55	1
Saskatoon East	38	9	9	30	74	92	0
Saskatoon Catholic	17	2	4	11	38	38	4
TOTALS	91	21	29	59	182	222	7
(1985-1986 Employed 100%)							
Saskatchewan Valley	34	29	11	3	64	67	5
Saskatoon West	32	16	15	28	85	84	1
Saskatoon East	52	18	14	17	111	85	1
Saskatoon Catholic	28	15	16	1	54	41	0
TOTALS	146	78	57	49	315	277	7

Table 1. Saskatoon Region Shared Services: Field Service

4. The Social Learning Centre

The Social Learning Centre was developed by the 4 cooperating school divisions to meet the needs of students with severe behavioral problems who are unable to cope with, or benefit from, the regular classroom program or support services that are available within the school division.

a. Emotional Difficulties

Students referred to the Centre may be experiencing severe emotional difficulties stemming from family violence, abuse, academic difficulties, family disfunction, separation or divorce, illness, accident, eating disorders, emotional immaturity, incontinence, fears, phobias, schizophrenia, psychosis, neurosis, autism, speech or language problems, affect, allergies or asthma.

b. Behavioral Problems

Students attending the Centre may be exhibiting one or more severe problems such as a conduct disorder, attention deficit, self control, delinquency, academic avoidance and underachievement, attention seeking, withdrawal, or inappropriate social behaviors.

c. Student Needs

Students who attend the Social Learning Centre have needs that are the same as our own needs in order to function productively. The Centre program works on helping the students meet these needs such as self worth, self confidence, self control, success, socially acceptable behavior, ability to deal with reality, communication skills, initiative, life skills, and problem solving.

d. Service Approach

A multidisciplinary approach to providing service to the students and their families includes the Centre staff, speech therapists, school nurse, the family, social services, MacNeill Clinic (Health), Youth Services (Mental Health), home school, base school, and the school division working in close cooperation (Figure 3).

e. Student Population

The Social Learning Centre was developed to meet the needs of 10 students in the classroom and 10 students in the field. Students attending the classroom are between the ages of 9 and 13 years. Those who receive the field service are between the ages of 6 and14 years. Each of the three rural school divisions has two openings in each of the two placement options. The urban school division purchases four positions in each option.

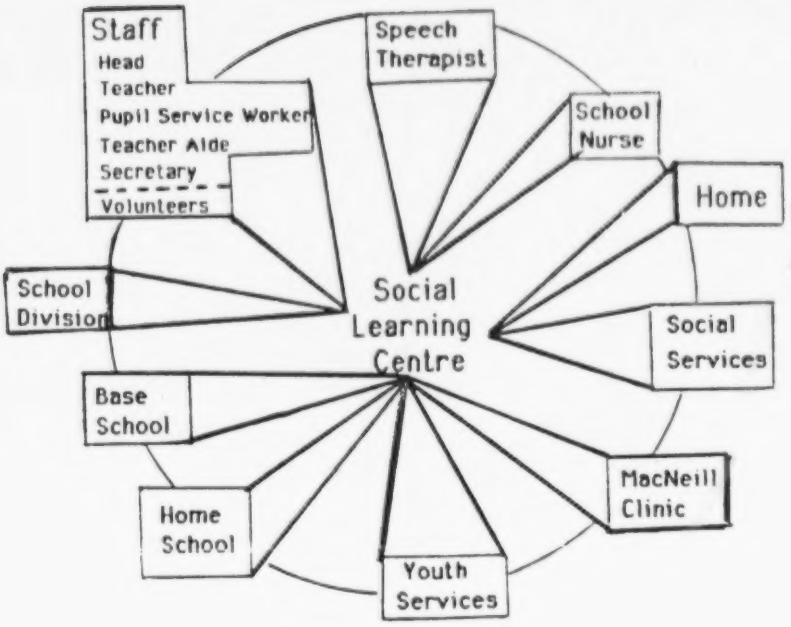

Figure 3.
A Multidisciplinary Approach

f. Staff

The Centre staff includes a half time Centre Head, a full time classroom teacher and teacher associate, a half time pupil service worker, and a half time secretary. Students in the Centre classroom receive the service of the entire staff. The students in the field receive primarily the service of the Centre Head and pupil service worker who work with the school and the family, respectively.

g. Program Individualization

Each student in the Centre classroom has an individual education plan (IEP) based on four dimensions: academic, behavioral, social, and familial. Each child's program is based on formal an informal assessment and developed through long range and daily planning. Ongoing evaluation of each student's progress and the effectiveness of his or her program assures that the student is receiving the best program for growth and development in order to return to the educational mainstream.

The classroom teacher with the assistance of the Centre Head is responsible for the academic, social, and behavioral components of each child's individual education plan. The pupil service worker assists with the social and behavioral portions through student counselling and is primarily responsible for the familial component. This is done through counselling with the parents in their homes and conducting parenting classes.

The various approaches used to bring about behavioral change and improve social skills include: 1. Modelling by exposing the students to the prosocial behaviors of adults and peers; 2. By placing students in strategic situations with other students who display prosocial behaviors; 3. By instructing students through the use of commercial programs and teacher made activities on how and why they should behave in a certain way and giving rules for behavior; 4. Students receive positive feedback for reporting accurately about their behaviors; 5. Structured practice of specific prosocial behaviors. Positive reinforcement and feedback are provided for prosocial behaviors or approximations; 6. Students are provided with prompts which elicit the procial behaviors; and 7. Actual experiences in muliple settings in order to practice the prosocial behaviors worked upon in the Centre.

In order to assess a student's progress, team meetings for each child and including the Centre staff, parents, and other agencies involved with the child and his or her family , are held every 3 to 5 weeks. Weekly staff meetings review the child's day to day performance and behavior. A written, progress report on each student is prepared every six weeks by the teacher and the pupil service worker with the assistance of the Centre Head for the parents and the school division.

h. Length of Stay

Students may stay up to two years in either the Centre classroom or the field service. There are many variables which determine the success of a student and how quickly he or she leaves the program. It has been found that two of the major variables are the parents' support of their child and the program, and the degree of their commitment to helping their child and to making improvements themselves. These improvements might range from a more positive interaction with their child to a strengthening of the parent's own self esteem.

Based on three full years' operation of the Social Learning Centre, the average stay of the students in the classroom has been 9.8 months. The percentage of students who have successfully returned to their home school has been 71%, while the 19% have been placed in alternate programs for academic reasons and 10% for behavioral ones. During this same period, students received the field service for and average of 7 months.

i. Student Integration and Reintegration

The Social Learning Centre classroom was placed in a regualsr school in order that the students could be integrated with the students of the base school. They have the same recesses and events such as assemblies, pancake breakfasts, holiday parties, skating, etc. Integration has been

successful for Physical Education, French, Science, Religion, and paired reading and writng with younger students. Since only a few students are integrated into one class at a time, the staff of the base school have been supportive of this partial integration.

Several options have been developed and implemented to assure that the student successfully returns to the educational mainstream. Careful planning and evaluation provide the basis for the decision that a student is ready to leave the Centre classroom or field service. The students may return directly to their home school and continue receiving the support services from the Centre Head and pupil service worker for a maximum period of 6 months. The students may be placed in a classroom in the base school for a few weeks to a year before returning to their home school. If students are not adequately prepared to return to their home schools, the decision may be made to have them enter a modified program such as an alternate high school or a residential or treatment program. The Centre program is beginning its fourth year and the reintegration has had considerable success.

j. Funding

Funding of the Social Learning Centre, which is located in a regular elementary school for children from Kindergarten to the Eighth Grade, is shared by the four school divisions. The Department of Social Services pays the Pupil Service Worker's salary and the Department of Health provides weekly consultation by a clinical psychologist.

k. Volunteers and Student Involvement

One of the goals of the program is to provide university students, students from a technical institute, and volunteers with the opportunity to work and learn within the classroom. This has been very beneficial to both the Centre and to those who become involved. Teachers from the students' home schools and other interested also come to the Centre to observe, participate, and learn.

Formation of a new service to meet the needs of students with behavioral disorders withinthe Saskatoon Region Shared Services has been an interesting and exciting experience. Although several successfulprogrmsand approaches have been developed, each student is unique and so the Centre staff and others involved continue to work to develop innovative and effective strategies and programs in effort to reach the students and help them to become happy, successful, and productive.

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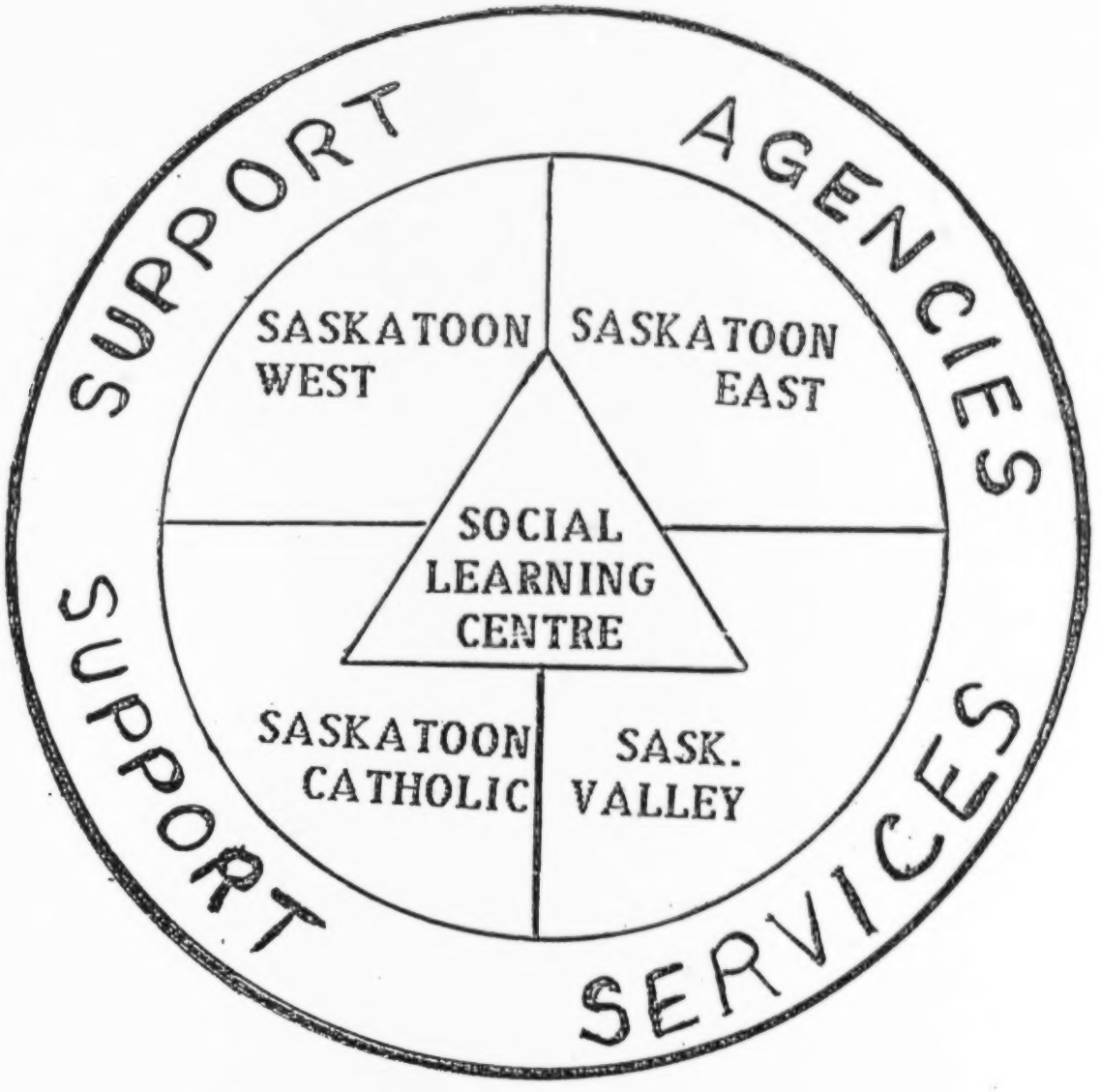

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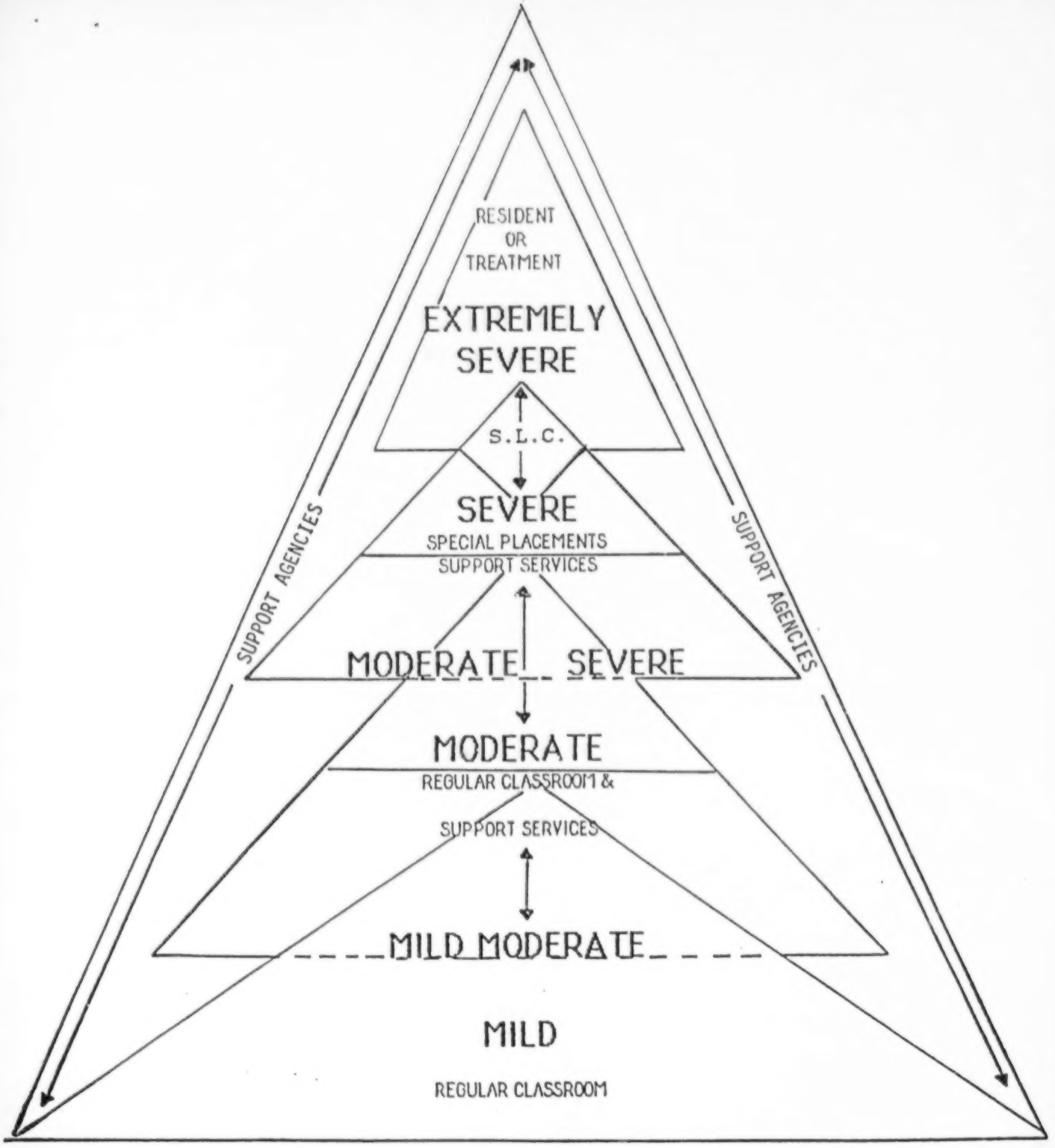
RESIDENT
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EXTREMELY
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SEVERE
SPECIAL PLACEMENTS
SUPPORT SERVICES
MODERATE SEVERE
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SUPPORT SERVICES
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A Multidisciplinary Approach to Working with Children in Conflict